

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~striketrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1-4, 9-12 and 17, and ADD new claim 19 in accordance with the following:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An image processing apparatus for dealing with objects in an object system consisting of a plurality of objects each having a pair of image data representative of an image and image attribute information representative of an attribute of the image, ~~wherein the plurality of objects are linked in form of a hierarchy structure including a parentage,~~ said image processing apparatus comprising:

object linking means for linking the plurality of objects in form of a hierarchy structure including parentage, and

object producing means for producing new objects, wherein when said object producing means produces new objects having a parent object, said object producing means sets up image attribute information of the parent object on the new objects now on production in form of a default.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An image processing apparatus for dealing with objects in an object system consisting of a plurality of objects each having a pair of image data representative of an image and image attribute information representative of an attribute of the image, ~~wherein the plurality of objects are linked in form of a hierarchy structure including a parentage,~~ said image processing apparatus comprising:

object linking means for linking the plurality of objects in form of a hierarchy structure including parentage, and

attribute altering means for altering image attribute information of existing objects, wherein when said attribute altering means alters image attribute information of an object having a descendant object, said attribute altering means causes image attribute information altered in image attribute information of an object to be altered to be reflected in the descendant object of the object to be altered.

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An image processing apparatus for dealing with objects in an object system consisting of a plurality of objects each having a pair of image data representative of an image and image attribute information representative of an attribute of the image, ~~wherein the plurality of objects are linked in form of a hierarchy structure including a parentage,~~ said image processing apparatus comprising:

object linking means for linking the plurality of objects in form of a hierarchy structure including parentage, and

object deleting means for deleting existing objects, wherein when said object deleting means deletes an object having descendant objects, said object deleting means deletes also the descendant objects of an object to be deleted.

4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An image processing apparatus for performing an image processing including a production processing for an object having a pair of image data representative of an image and image attribute information representative of an attribute of the image, said image processing apparatus comprising:

storage means for storing image attribute information for a default, where a plurality of objects of the image and the image attribute information are linked in form of a hierarchy structure including parentage; and

object producing means for producing objects,

wherein said object producing means sets up image attribute information stored in said storage means on an object now on production in form of a default.

5. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said image processing apparatus deals with a medical image, and the image attribute information includes patient information and photographic condition.

6. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) An image processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said image processing apparatus deals with a medical image, and the image attribute information includes patient information and photographic condition.

7. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) An image processing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said image processing apparatus deals with a medical image, and the image attribute

information includes patient information and photographic condition.

8. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) An image processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said image processing apparatus deals with a medical image, and the image attribute information includes patient information and photographic condition.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A program storage medium loaded onto a computer system for storing an image processing program for causing said computer system to operate as an image processing apparatus for dealing with objects in an object system consisting of a plurality of objects each having a pair of image data representative of an image and image attribute information representative of an attribute of the image, ~~wherein the plurality of objects are linked in form of a hierarchy structure including a parentage,~~ said image processing program comprising:

object linking means for linking the plurality of objects in form of a hierarchy structure including parentage, and

object producing means for producing new objects, wherein when said object producing means produces new objects having a parent object, said object producing means sets up image attribute information of the parent object on the new objects now on production in form of a default.

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A program storage medium loaded onto a computer system for storing an image processing program for causing said computer system to operate as an image processing apparatus for dealing with objects in an object system consisting of a plurality of objects each having a pair of image data representative of an image and image attribute information representative of an attribute of the image, ~~wherein the plurality of objects are linked in form of a hierarchy structure including a parentage,~~ said image processing program comprising:

object linking means for linking the plurality of objects in form of a hierarchy structure including parentage, and

attribute altering means for altering image attribute information of existing objects, wherein when said attribute altering means alters image attribute information of an object having a descendant object, said attribute altering means causes image attribute information altered in image attribute information of an object to be altered to be reflected in the descendant object of

the object to be altered.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A program storage medium loaded onto a computer system for storing an image processing program for causing said computer system to operate as an image processing apparatus for dealing with objects in an object system consisting of a plurality of objects each having a pair of image data representative of an image and image attribute information representative of an attribute of the image, ~~wherein the plurality of objects are linked in form of a hierarchy structure including a parentage,~~ said image processing program comprising:

object linking means for linking the plurality of objects in form of a hierarchy structure including parentage, and

object deleting means for deleting existing objects, wherein when said object deleting means deletes an object having descendant objects, said object deleting means deletes also the descendant objects of an object to be deleted.

12. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A program storage medium loaded onto a computer system for storing an image processing program for causing said computer system to operate as an image processing apparatus for dealing with objects in an object system consisting of a plurality of objects each having a pair of image data representative of an image and image attribute information representative of an attribute of the image, ~~wherein the plurality of objects are linked in form of a hierarchy structure including a parentage,~~ said image processing program comprising:

object linking means for linking the plurality of objects in form of a hierarchy structure including parentage, and

object producing means for producing objects, wherein said object producing means sets up a predetermined image attribute information on an object now on production in form of a default.

13. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A program storage medium according to claim 9, wherein said image processing program deals with a medical image, and the image attribute information includes patient information and photographic condition.

14. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A program storage medium according to claim 10,

wherein said image processing program deals with a medical image, and the image attribute information includes patient information and photographic condition.

15. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A program storage medium according to claim 11, wherein said image processing program deals with a medical image, and the image attribute information includes patient information and photographic condition.

16. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A program storage medium according to claim 12, wherein said image processing program deals with a medical image, and the image attribute information includes patient information and photographic condition.

17. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An image processing method, comprising:  
~~for~~ hierarchically linking a plurality of objects, each having image data and image attribute information of an image, ~~comprising:~~ and  
processing the image based on a linkage of the plurality of objects, and automatically setting up image attribute information of a parent object for a new object when the new object having the parent object is produced.

18. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An image processing method according to claim 17, further comprising:  
reflecting altered image attribute information of the parent object in image attribute information of a descendant object when the parent object is altered.

19. (NEW) An image processing method, comprising:  
classifying a plurality of objects each having a pair of image data representative of an image and an image attribute information, the classification being based on a hierarchical structure; and  
processing the image based on the hierarchical structure of the classification, where the image succeeds to objects of an upper classification and objects of a lower classification succeed to objects of the image.